

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL SUPPORT AND GRATITUDE WITH SELF-ACCEPTANCE OF MOTHERS WITH CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Raihana

Universitas Islam Riau

Email: raihana@fis.uir.ac.id

Alucyana

Universitas Islam Riau

Email: alucyana@fis.uir.ac.id

Yenni Yunita

Universitas Islam Riau

Email: yennyunita@fis.uir.ac.id

Putri Adri Yani

Universitas Islam Riau

Email: putriadriyani@student.uir.ac.id

Dinda Amalia

Universitas Islam Riau

Email: dindamalia@student.uir.ac.id

Article received: 01 November 2025, Review process: 07 January 2026,

Article Accepted: 29 February 2026, Article published: 30 March 2026

ABSTRACT

Parents who are unfortunate enough to have children with special needs often experience sadness and disappointment. Disbelief in this situation can lead to emotional reactions such as anger, depression, and bargaining when their expectations are not met. In these circumstances, social support and gratitude are crucial to encourage mothers and foster acceptance of their children. This study aimed to determine the relationship between social support, gratitude, and self-acceptance among mothers of children with special needs. This study was conducted at the Kasih Ibu Special Education School in Pekanbaru, with a sample of 30 mothers of children enrolled in the first grade at the school. The research method used was quantitative and correlational. A purposive sampling method was used, with scales measuring social support, gratitude, and self-acceptance. The results of this study indicate a positive influence of social support and gratitude on self-acceptance among mothers of children with special needs. This influence is manifested through the variables of maternal self-acceptance, gratitude, and social support. Regarding the maternal self-acceptance variable, the t-test yielded a value of $2.394 > 2.052$ with a probability of 0.04 ($p < 0.05$). Hypothesis H_1 is thus accepted,

meaning that maternal self-acceptance has a significant positive influence, partly due to social support and gratitude.

Keywords: *Maternal self-acceptance, Social support, Gratitude, Children with special needs*

INTRODUCTION

When someone marries and wants to have children, they always hope to have children who develop normally. However, some children are born with disabilities, which can hinder their growth and development. Consequently, some parents have children with disabilities. According to the Directorate General of Population and Civil Registration (Dukcapil) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Indonesia's population reached 268,583,016 in 2020 (Nugrahaeny, 2020). Meanwhile, the prevalence of children with special needs is estimated at 10% of the total number of approximately 42.8 million school-age children (Nugrahaeny, 2020)

This situation causes many parents to hide their children's disabilities from friends, neighbors, and family (Munandar, 2019). Many still struggle to accept their children's disabilities and therefore prefer not to reveal them to others. Plexico, et al (Plexico, Erath, Shores, & Burrus, 2019) describe the characteristics of individuals with good self-acceptance as follows: 1) the belief that everything they possess contributes to their self-confidence; 2) the ability to live a fulfilling life; 3) full responsibility for their actions and the courage to accept the consequences; 4) self-esteem while remaining open to outside opinions and suggestions.

Parents play a crucial role in children's development. Although mothers often carry a heavier burden than fathers, this is because they are responsible for raising their children, which causes them to communicate with them continuously (Pradana & Kustanti, 2017). Furthermore, mothers know and understand their children's nature and character best, both internally and externally, and they maintain a very strong emotional bond with their children. (Desiningrum, 2016)

Several previous studies have shown that the presence of mothers is very important for children with disabilities, especially in terms of emotional support. (Pancawati, Pitaloka, & Sasqia, 2016). Hurlock (Hurlock, 2013) stated that parents who adopt a positive attitude towards their children with special needs can help them develop a more realistic and open view of themselves, especially regarding their strengths and weaknesses. Parents, especially mothers of children with special needs, must be able to recognize their children's disabilities or special needs, even though this is difficult for most parents, especially mothers, to accept. Parents, and especially mothers, must first accept their children's situation realistically. Once this genuine acceptance is established, the mother will gradually accept her child's situation. Hurt dan Gibi (Elianto & Hendriani, 2013) have a similar view, stating that parents who accept their children are those who willingly acknowledge and accept the reality of their difficulties and disabilities.

In general, parents, especially mothers of children with special needs, tend to gradually move away from their ideal vision of their children and struggle to accept that their children always need affection, love, and attention, regardless of the circumstances. However, many parents fail to accept their child's situation and consider it a burden. (Susanto, 2014). According to Kubbler Ross (Ramanda, 2016), mothers may go through various stages at different times. Therefore, there is no definitive timeline for each stage. Finally, it is important to remember, in this process

of self-acceptance, that each mother has unique characteristics and traits specific to her personality. In this context, the hopes and desires of mothers of children with special needs lie in how supportive and understanding their environment is of their situation. However, it is very difficult for most people to understand the situation of mothers and their children with special needs. Furthermore, there is a mother's desire to care for and raise her child, and therefore to experience happiness and joy.

In this context, the hopes and desires of mothers of children with special needs depend on how well their social environment supports and understands their situation. However, it is often difficult for the general public to fully understand the realities of mothers and their children, even though they are eager to share their happiness and joy. (Nura & Sari, 2018). As a result, it is not uncommon for these mothers to lack support, especially from their immediate environment.

Parents, especially mothers of children with special needs, desperately need support. This support can come from family, relatives, in-laws, neighbors, colleagues, and close friends (Raharjo, 2020). Support can be expressed through comfort, empathy, sympathy, and recognition. Johnson & Medinnus (Zaini & 'Azizah, 2024) stated that the presence of people who provide assistance, encouragement, and attention contributes to everyone's well-being. Research conducted by Fitria (Fitria., 2019) found that social support was significantly related to parental acceptance of children with special needs. A similar study conducted by Kania and Yanuvianti (Kania & Yanuvianti, 2018) also found a positive and significant relationship between social support and parental acceptance of children with special needs.

Self-acceptance among mothers of children with special needs is influenced not only by social support but also by gratitude to God, even though having a child exceeds most parents' expectations. This allows mothers, in particular, to more easily accept their children's disabilities or special needs. Gratitude allows them to accept reality as it is and acknowledge it. Then, they express their gratitude to God by faithfully fulfilling His commands (worship), avoiding actions forbidden by God, and accepting trials, including calamities, ensuring that their words, feelings, and actions are always in accordance with His teachings. (Takdir, 2019)

However, in the field, mothers of children with special needs at Kasih Ibu Special Needs School (SLB) observed that they had not fully accepted their children's presence. This became clear during initial observations and interviews conducted by researchers with the principal. The principal explained that some parents did not pick up their children themselves but instead asked their housemaids or drivers to take them. This was not due to a lack of time. Furthermore, Ibu Teni, the principal, also mentioned that several mothers had told her about the difficulties they faced as parents, particularly parents of children with special needs.

Many previous studies have focused solely on internal factors such as gratitude or external factors such as social support, in influencing self-acceptance. However, few have examined how spiritual strength (gratitude) interacts with external support (social support) simultaneously in mothers during the school transition (first grade). This is important because without gratitude, mothers may feel dissatisfied or focus solely on shortcomings. Gratitude helps mothers interpret difficult situations positively, while social support provides reassurance that they are not alone. Therefore, the combination of these two variables creates a stronger psychological defense system that can lead to a stable level of self-acceptance.

The above description helps us understand that the negative impact on children stems from mothers' low self-acceptance of children with special needs. Two important factors for this acceptance, both internal and external, are social support and gratitude. Based on the above discussion regarding maternal acceptance, issues related to social support, and gratitude, the researcher intends to conduct a study entitled "Mothers' Acceptance of Children with Special Needs: An Analysis of Social Support and Gratitude."

METHODS

This study used a quantitative correlational approach, with the dependent variable (Y) being self-acceptance, and the independent variables being gratitude (X1) and social support (X2). The population in this study was 325 mothers of children with special needs attending the Kasih Ibu Special Needs School (SLB). The sample was drawn using purposive sampling. According to this research using quantitative correlation, where the dependent variable (Y) is self-acceptance, then the independent variables are gratitude (X1) and social support (X2).

Purposive sampling is a sampling technique based on specific criteria. In this type of sampling, subjects are selected based on specific characteristics related to the study population. The criteria for eligible respondents in this study were mothers of children with special needs enrolled in the first grade at the Kasih Ibu Special Needs Elementary School. Based on these criteria, a sample of 30 respondents was selected. Mothers with first-grade children at the Kasih Ibu Special Needs School were chosen because first-grade students, with an average age of 6-7 years, are still in the early childhood category and are also a major transition period from a play environment (kindergarten) to a more structured academic environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Questionnaire yang beghekan kepada 30 orang ibu yang memiliki anak berkebutuhannkhusus mendat hasil adanya influen positiv adamaan social dan rasa syukur tapaang tepanan diri para ibu tersebut. This is explained by the fact that the support received from the social environment, the couple, and their family, as well as the gratitude they feel, contribute to the acceptance of their children, so that they can care for their children in a calm and effective way.

Based on this result, the normality test applied to the variables "thank you" and "social support" produced the Kolmogorov-Smirnov result with a significance level of $0.06 > 0.05$, which indicates that the analyzed data fulfills the normality assumption.

Tabel 1. Hasil uji linearitas

Variabel	F	Sig	Keterangan
Kebersyukuran dan Dukungan Sosial	1.565	,229	Linieritas

The test results above yield a significant deviation from linearity between the independent and dependent variables of 1.565. This means that the relationship

between the independent and dependent variables meets the linearity assumption. This indicates that social support and gratitude, both individually and simultaneously, have an impact on self-acceptance among mothers of children with special needs.

Similarly, the statistical analysis (t-test) yields the following results:

Table 2. Hasil Uji Hipotesis

Variabel	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	sig
Constant	34.700	14.091		2.463	0.04
Dukungan Sosial	.049	.165	.061	2.394	0.02
Kebersyukuran	.446	.204	.457	2.193	.004

Based on the results of multiple regression tests, the regression correlation value between social support and maternal self-acceptance is 0.049 and a significance level of 0.02 ($p < 0.05$), so it can be concluded that social support has an influence on maternal self-acceptance, H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. Furthermore, based on table 2, it also shows the regression correlation value between gratitude and maternal self-acceptance of 0.446 and a significance level of 0.004 ($p < 0.05$), so it can be concluded that gratitude has an influence on resilience, H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.

Meanwhile, the t-test results for the regression model showed a significant impact of each independent variable (social support and gratitude) on the dependent variable (resilience). The coefficient value for social support was 0.049 with a t-value of 2.394 $>$ 2.052 with a sig. value of 0.02, which is very low ($p < 0.05$). Thus, H_1 was accepted, which means there is a significant positive influence on maternal self-acceptance partially viewed from social support and gratitude.

Tabel 3. Coefficient Test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	253.274	2	126.637	3.824	.004
	Residual	794.726	24	33.114		
	Total	1048.000	26			

- Dependent Variabel: Dukungan Sosial dan Kebersyukuran
- Predictors (Constant). Penerimaan diri ibu yang memiliki anak berkebutuhan khusus

Likewise, for the hypothesis test, the f count is 3.824 with a probability of 0.04, which is below 0.05. This indicates that the independent variable, This shows that the dependent variables, namely social support and gratitude, have a significant influence simultaneously, thus H_2 is accepted.

Tabel 4. Results of the Determination Coefficient Test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.792 ^a	.742	.778	5.754

Based on the table above, the r value is 0.792, indicating a strong correlation between variables x and y , with an f -value of 3.824, with a probability of 0.04 ($p < 0.05$).

The results described above indicate that social support from family and the surrounding environment encourages mothers to strive for gratitude in their daily lives. This, in turn, leads to parents, particularly mothers, experiencing more positive emotions and being better able to respond effectively to both positive and negative events in their lives (such as accepting their children's condition and providing optimal care). (Ikhwanisifa, Merettih, Susanti, & Zahira, 2024)

The results above align with Kyzar et al.'s (Kyzar, Turnbull, Summers, & Gomez, The Relationship of Family Support to Family Outcomes: A Synthesis of Key Findings from Research on Severe Disability, 2012), The self-acceptance of mothers with children with special needs can be enhanced by receiving support from the smallest social circle, as well as by continuously cultivating gratitude in the hearts and behaviors of family members. When parents receive emotional, informational, material, or other forms of support, mothers can resolve the problems that arise while raising a child with special needs. According to research conducted by Ikhwanisifa, et al (Ikhwanisifa, Merettih, Susanti, & Zahira, 2024) Gratitude has a higher predictive power than family (social) support. Therefore, parents, especially mothers, are expected to have a high sense of gratitude in their family life. Therefore, when mothers have a high sense of gratitude, they are more likely to spend time caring for and caring for their children with special needs.

Other research also suggests that, in addition to social support, gratitude is another factor influencing a family's quality of life. Ideally, parents, especially mothers, should cultivate gratitude both in their hearts, verbally, and through their actions. Parents who are able to express gratitude in all situations and in various ways will be able to become individuals who always sincerely accept and feel their lives are full of blessings (Ati, Matulesy, & Rochim, 2018). When parents or mothers are grateful by sincerely accepting the special needs child entrusted to them, it is a most precious and positive event, as well as a blessing in caring for them, then the parents will be happier. This perceived happiness is what indicates that parents with special needs children have a good quality of family life.

Langeland echoed this sentiment (Langeland, 2014) which states that when an individual is happy, it helps them feel positive about every event or occurrence they experience. Furthermore, grateful people will always strive to accept every event and situation they experience, even if it doesn't meet their expectations, thus making them more accepting of whatever happens in their lives. This opinion also aligns with Haryanto & Kertamuda (Haryanto & Kertamuda, 2016) who found that when individuals are grateful and accept the conditions they experience, this will have a positive impact on the behavior that emerges, such as becoming more patient and having a broad heart to accept existing conditions.

Two different variables used in this study position gratitude not only as a single variable, but also interacting with other variables, namely social support, which turns out to provide a new perspective where external and internal factors collaborate to shape self-acceptance in mothers who have children with special needs. According

to the Broaden-and-Build theory (Fredrickson, 2004) positive emotions in the form of gratitude can expand the mother's cognitive awareness, thus enabling mothers to find the spirit to accept the condition of their children who have disabilities as a whole.

CONCLUSION

After processing the research data, this study found a positive effect between social support and gratitude on the self-acceptance of mothers of children with special needs. This means that mothers who feel grateful for having a child with special needs simultaneously play a very significant role in maternal self-acceptance, along with social support. However, social support and gratitude are crucial for the self-acceptance of mothers of children with special needs, so that maternal self-acceptance can be achieved optimally. The results of this study can also be a new finding of the role of social support and gratitude together considering that in this study not only places gratitude as a single variable but also interacts with other variables, namely social support, in addition, this study of self-acceptance does not only look at internal factors but also looks at external factors so that it strengthens the results of previous studies related to the role of social support and gratitude on maternal self-acceptance. In addition, the results of this study can also be used by special education practitioners to design parenting modules that are not only educational technical, but also touch on aspects of parental mental health that directly affect the effectiveness of child therapy.

REFERENCES

- Ati, M., Matulesy, A., & Rochim, M. (2018). The Relationship Between Gratitude and Social Support with The Stress of Parents Who Have Children in Need of Special. *Journal of Child Development Studies*, 3 (1)(<https://doi.org/10.29244/jcnds.3.1.44->), 44.
- Desiningrum, D. R. (2016). *Psikologi Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus*. Yogyakarta: Psikosain.
- Elianto, H., & Hendriani, W. (2013). Hubungan Kecerdasan Emosi Dengan Penerimaan Ibu Terhadap Anak Kandung yang Mengalami Cerebral Palsy. *Jurnal Psikologi Pendidikan dan Perkembangan*, 2(2). 124-130.
- Fitria. (2019). *Pengaruh Kecerdasan Emosi, Dukungan Sosial dan Rasa Syukur Terhadap Penerimaan Orang Tua Pada Anak dengan Kebutuhan Khusus*. Jakarta: Skripsi/. UIN Syarif Hidayatullah.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2004). The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions, Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: *Biological Sciences*, 359(1449), 1367–1377.
- Hambali, A., Meiza, A., & Fahmi, I. (2015). Faktor-faktor yang berperan dalam kebersyukuran (gratitude) pada orang tua anak berkebutuhan khusus perspektif psikologi Islam. *Psymphatic: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi*, 2(1), 94-101.
- Haryanto, H. C., & Kertamuda, F. E. (2016). Syukur Sebagai Sebuah Pemaknaan. *Insight: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi*, 18(2 <https://doi.org/10.26486/psikologi.v18i2.395>), 109.
- Hurlock, E. B. (2013). *Psikologi Perkembangan: Suatu Pendekatan Sepanjang Rentang Kehidupan, Edisi Kelima*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
-

-
- Ikhwanisifa, Merettih, A. K., Susanti, R., & Zahira, G. R. (2024). Peran Dukungan Keluarga dan Kebersyukuran terhadap Kualitas Hidup Keluarga Pada Orang tua dengan Anak berkebutuhan Khusus. *Generasi Emas*, 7 (1), 13-20.
- Kania, P., & Yanuvianti, M. (2018). Hubungan dukungan sosial dengan penerimaan diri pada ibu. *SPeSIA: Prosiding Psikologi*, 4(1). 103-107.
- Kyzar, K. B., Turnbull, A. P., Summers, J. A., & Gomez, V. A. (2012). The Relationship of Family Support to Family Outcomes: A Synthesis of Key Findings from Research on Severe Disability. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 37(1)(<https://doi.org/10.2511/027494812800903247>), 31-44.
- Kyzar, K. B., Turnbull, A. P., Summers, J. A., & Gómez, V. A. (2012). The Relationship of Family Support to Family Outcomes: A Synthesis of Key Findings from Research on Severe Disability. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 37(1)(<https://doi.org/10.2511/027494812800903247>), 31-44.
- Langeland, E. (2014). Emotional Well-Being. In A. C. Michalos (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*(https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_859), 1874 - 1876.
- Munandar, T. (2019). *Penerimaan Diri Orangtua yang Memiliki Anak Difabel Netra di SLB-A Yaketunis Yogyakarta*. Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga.
- Murisal, M., & Hasanah, T. (2017). ubungan Bersyukur dengan Kesejahteraan Subjektif pada Orang Tua yang Memiliki Anak Tunagrahita di SLB Negeri 2 Kota Padang. *KONSELI : Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling (E-Journal)*, 4(2 <https://doi.org/10.24042/kons.v4i2.2176>), 81-88.
- Nugrahaeny, D. E. (2020). *Data Kependudukan 2020 : Penduduk Indonesia 268.583.016 Jiwa*. Jakarta. <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/08/12/15261351/data-kependudukan-2020-pendudukindonesia-> Kompas.com.
- Nura, A., & Sari, K. (2018). Kebersyukuran pada ibu yang memiliki anak berkebutuhan khusus. *Jurnal Ecopsy*, 5(2), 73-80. <http://dx.doi.org/10.20527/ecopsy.v5i2.5041>.
- Pancawati, A., Pitaloka, A., & Sasqia, D. (2016). Peran Orang tua dalam Memenuhi Pembelajaran Pada Anak Mental Disorder. *Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Sosial*, 28(2), 115-124.
- Plexico, L. W., Erath, S., Shores, H., & Burrus, E. (2019). Self-Acceptance, Resilience, Coping and Satisfaction of Life in People who Stutter. *Journal of Fluency Disorders*, 59, 52-63.
- Pradana, & Kustanti. (2017). Hubungan Antara Dukungan Sosial Suami dengan Psychological Well Being Pada Ibu yang Memiliki Anak Autisme. *Jurnal Empati*, 6(2), 83-90.
- Raharjo, N. K. (2020). Hubungan Antara Dukungan Sosial Dan Penerimaan Diri Orangtua Dari Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus (ABK) . Semarang: (*Doctoral dissertation*, Unika Soegijapranata Semarang).
- Smith, A., Pedersen, E. J., Forster, D. E., McCullough, M. E., & Lieberman, D. (2017). Cooperation: The roles of interpersonal value and gratitude. *Evolution and*
-

Human Behavior. 38(6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2017.08.003>), 695-703.

Sugiyono. (2016). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.

Susanto, S. E. (2014). Penerimaan Orang Tua terhadap Kondisi Anaknya yang Menyandang Autisme di Rumah Terapis Little Star . *Jurnal Psikosains*, 9(2), 140-152 <https://journal.umg.ac.id/index.php/psikosains/article/view/247>.

Takdir, M. (2019). *Psikologi Syukur: Perspektif Psikologi Qurani dan Psikologi Positif untuk Menggapai Kebahagiaan Sejati (Authentic Happiness)*. . Jakarta: Elex Media.

Zaini, A. H., & 'Azizah, N. (2024). Dukungan Sosial Dengan Penerimaan Pada Orang Tua Yang Memiliki Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus. *Happiness Journal of Psychology and Islamic Science*, 8 (1), 12-29. DOI: 10.30762/happiness.v8i1.1198.